

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A computer-implemented method comprising:
 ~~automatically requesting database connection information to a database during~~
~~initialization of a web application server;~~
 receiving, from an application executing on a user terminal, a database
access statement at a web application server;
 accessing a user-configurable key phrase from a key phrase file located in a
~~central~~ shared directory accessible by a plurality of web application servers in
response to receiving the database access statement ~~of a distributed system responsive~~
~~to the request for the connection information;~~
 combining a system identifier of the web application server with the user-
configurable encryption key phrase to create an encryption key;
 obtaining an encrypted string from a secure storage file in the ~~central~~ shared
directory via a find operation;
 parsing the encrypted string into substrings; and
 decrypting one of the substrings with the encryption key to obtain connection
information to a database including a password and an address for the database.
- 2-4. (Cancelled)
5. **(Cancelled)**
6. (Cancelled)
7. **(Cancelled)**
8. **(Original)** The method of claim 7, wherein the address for the database is a
Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

9-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein decrypting the value string comprises:

decrypting the value string with a triple Data Encryption Standard (DES) algorithm.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the obtained connection information includes a Java string.

14-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the Web application server is compatible with the J2EE standard.

18. **(Currently Amended)** A system comprising:
a web application server to access a **user-configurable encryption** key phrase from a filesystem of the web application server responsive to an automatic request to connect with a database during initialization of the web application server, wherein the web application server includes a system identifier to identify the application server and the key phrase is to be combined with the system identifier;
a central directory to store a string and to provide the string to the web application server responsive to receiving the combination of the system identifier and the key phrase from the web application server;
a parser to parse the string **into substrings**; and
the database to provide requested data to the web application server.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the database is a relational database system.

21-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the Web application server is implemented according to the Java 2 Enterprise Edition Standard.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the stored string includes at least one of:

a password to connect with the remote node; and
an address of the remote node.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the string is to be stored in a data store of the central directory.

28. (Original) The system of claim 27, wherein the data store of the central directory is encrypted.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28 wherein the data store is encrypted with a triple DES algorithm.

30. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the data store of the central directory may be transitioned from storing unencrypted data to storing encrypted data.

31. (Cancelled)

32-33. (Cancelled)

34-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:
~~means for automatically requesting database connection information to a database during initialization of a web application server;~~

means for receiving, from an application executing on a user terminal, a database access statement at a web application server;

means for accessing a **user-configurable** key phrase from a **key phrase file located in a central shared directory accessible by a plurality of web application servers in response to receiving the database access statement** ~~of a distributed system responsive to the request for the connection information;~~

means for combining a system identifier of the web application server with the **user-configurable encryption** key phrase to create an encryption key;

means for obtaining an **encrypted** string from a secure storage file in the ~~central~~ **shared** directory via a find operation;

means for parsing the **encrypted** string into **substrings**; and

means for decrypting **one of the substrings** with the encryption key to obtain connection information **to a database including a password and an address for the database**

37-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:
an electronically accessible medium providing instructions that, when executed by an apparatus, cause the apparatus to

~~automatically request database connection information to a database during initialization of a web application server;~~

receive, from an application executing on a user terminal, a database access statement at a web application server;

access a user-configurable key phrase from a key phrase file located in a central ~~shared~~ directory accessible by a plurality of web application servers in response to receiving the database access statement of a ~~distributed system responsive to the request for the connection information~~;

combine a system identifier of the web application server with the user-configurable encryption key phrase to create an encryption key;

obtain an encrypted string from a secure storage file in the ~~central~~-shared directory via a find operation;

parse the encrypted string into substrings; and

decrypt one of the substrings with the encryption key to obtain connection information to a database including a password and an address for the database.

40-41. (Cancelled)

42-43. (Cancelled)